

POEMS

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

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ALFRED NOYES

W. W. Willing Smith

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POEMS

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P O E M S

BY

ALFRED NOYES

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
HAMILTON W. MABIE



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INTRODUCTION

It will interest American readers to know that Mr. Noyes was born on the sixteenth day of September, 1880, and published his first poem in the weekly edition of the London *Times* while in residence at Exeter College, Oxford. That he had other than literary interests is evidenced by the fact that he rowed in the college eight for three years. After leaving college he contributed poems to leading English periodicals, including the *Spectator*, *Bookman*, *Outlook*, and *Speaker*; while most of his longer pieces found places in what Poe called "the most famous magazine in Europe," *Blackwood's*.

Five volumes of verse contain Mr. Noyes's published work to this time. All these books

bear London imprints, and three are of the slender proportions which suggest the young poet modestly seeking his own in the mob of modern readers. "The Loom of Years" appeared in 1902, "The Flower of Old Japan" in 1903, "Poems" in 1904, and "The Forest of Wild Thyme" in 1905, "Drake: an English Epic" in 1906. Of these books of verse two are devoted to lyrics on a wide range of themes, while in "The Flower of Old Japan" and "The Forest of Wild Thyme" the poet escapes the

"tyranny of fact
To hunt the fairy gleam."

These excursions into fairy-land bear the evidence of the poet's grace and gift in their freedom, spontaneity, joyousness. They open new play-grounds in this laborious modern world, and betray the touch of a hand pos-

sessed not only of the skill of craftsmanship but of imagination: —

“ Yet how can a child of the night
Brighten the light of the sun?
How can he add a delight
To the dances that never are done?

“ Ah, what if he struggles to turn
Once more to the sweet old skies
With praise and praise, from the fetters that burn
To the God that brightened your eyes.”

Mr. Noyes is already well known in England, and the quality of his work has awakened the hope that he is to enrich the poetry of the day with new ventures of insight and art. The poems collected in this volume represent his oldest and his latest work; many are presented for the first time, others have been selected from “*The Loom of Years*” and “*Poems.*” Lack of space has made it impossible in this volume to present Mr. Noyes’s more elaborate

work, which, like "The Progress of Love," a lyrical symphony, furnishes abundant evidence of his easy command of verse-forms.

It is idle to prejudge a book of verse which is likely to select those readers who are most sensitive to the fresh touch, the vital feeling, the individual skill in that intimate and consoling art to which men have committed their dreams, their divinations, and their visions since language began to turn to music in the hands of the poets. It may not be venturing too far into the field of individual judgment, however, to suggest that Mr. Noyes's claim upon the attention of those who care for poetry lies in the unusual blending in his work of the gay temper and the serious mood. No singer can refresh us in these days who cannot bring from his pipe the sounds which have set the feet of childhood flying in every generation;

nor can any singer command our thought to whom the deeper undertones of life are inaudible. Many things might be said of the freshness of Mr. Noyes's use of the imagination, of his charming fancy, of his good luck with phrase and epithet; but if he speaks to his generation with both beguilement and authority, it will be because the heart of the child and the mind of the man are in him.

HAMILTON W. MABIE.

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POEMS

THE PASSING OF SUMMER

(AN ODE)

Now, like a pageant of the Golden Year,
In rich memorial pomp the hours go by,
With rose-embroidered flags unfurled
And tasselled bugles calling through the world;

‘Wake, for your hope draws near!

Wake, for in each soft porch of azure sky,
Seen through each arch of pale green leaves,

the Gate

Of Eden swings apart for Summer’s royal
state.’

Ah, when the Spirit of the moving scene

Has entered in, the splendour will be spent!

The flutes will cease, the Gates will close!

Only the scattered crimson of the rose,

The wild-wood's hapless queen
Dis-kingdomed, will declare the way he went;
And, in a little while, her court will go,
Pass like a cloud and leave no trace on earth
below.

Tell us no more of Autumn, the slow gold
Of fruitage ripening in a world's decay,
The falling leaves, the moist rich breath
Of woodlands crumbling through a gorgeous
death

To glut the cancerous mould!
Give us the flash and scent of keen-edged may
Where wastes that bear no harvest yield their
bloom,
Rude crofts of flowering nettle, bents of yellow
broom.

The very reeds and sedges of the fen
Open their hearts and blossom to the sky!

The wild thyme on the mountain's knees

Unrolls its purple market to the bees!

Unharvested of men

The Traveller's Joy can only smile and die!

Joy, joy alone the throbbing white-throats

bring,

Joy to themselves and heaven; they were but

born to sing.

And see, between the northern-scented pines,

The whole sweet summer sharpens to a

glow!

See, as the well-spring plashes cool

Over a shadowy green fern-fretted pool

The mystic sunbeam shines

For one mad moment on a breast of snow,

A warm white shoulder, and a glowing arm

Up-flung, where some swift Undine sinks in

shy alarm.

And if she were not all a dream, and lent

Life for a little to your own desire,

Oh, lover in the hawthorn lane,

Dream not you hold her, or you dream in
vain!

The violet, spray-besprent

When from that plunge the rainbows flashed
like fire,

Will scarce more swiftly lose its happy dew

Than eyes which Undine haunts will cease to
shine on you.

What though the throstle pours his heart away,

A happy spendthrift of uncounted gold,

Swinging upon the blossomed briar

With soft throat lifted in a wild desire

To make the world his may,

Ever the pageant through the Gates is rolled

Further away: in vain the rich notes throng

Flooding the mellow noon with rapturous
waves of song.

The feathery meadows, like a lilac sea,
Knee-deep, with honeyed clover red and
white,
Roll billowing; the crisp clouds pass,
Trailing their soft blue shadows o'er the grass;
The sky-lark, mad with glee,
Quivers, up, up, to lose himself in light;
And, through the forest, like a fairy dream
Through some dark mind, the ferns in branch-
ing beauty stream.

Enough of joy! A little respite lend,
Summer, fair god that hast so little heed
Of these that serve thee but to die,
Mere trappings of thy tragic pageantry!
Show us the end, the end!

We too, with human hearts that break and
bleed,

March to the night that rounds their fleeting
hour,

And feel we, too, perchance but serve some
loftier Power.

Oh, that our hearts might pass away with
thee,

Burning and pierced and full of thy sweet
pain;

Burst through the Gates with thy swift soul,
Hunt thy most white perfection to the
goal,

Nor wait, once more to see

Thy chaliced lilies rotting in the rain,

Thy ragged yellowing banners idly hung

In woods that have forgotten all the songs we
sung.

*Peace! Like a pageant of the Golden Year,
In rich memorial pomp the noon sweeps by,
With rose-embroidered flags unfurled
And tasselled bugles calling through the world,
‘Wake, for your hope draws near!
Wake, for in each soft porch of azure sky,
Seen through each arch of pale green leaves, the
Gate
Of Eden swings apart for Summer’s royal state.’*

Not wait! Forgive, forgive that feeble cry
Of blinded passion all unworthy thee!
For here the spirit of man may claim
A loftier vision and a nobler aim
Than e’er was born to die:
Man only, of earth, throned on Eternity,
From his own sure abiding-place can mark
How earth’s great golden dreams go past into
the dark!

HEINE'S DREAM

IN dreams my false love comes to me,
 In dreams, in dreams by night;
But her kiss is a yearning agony,
 Her face is wrung and white.

I feel the cold and quivering mouth
 Cleave as in long past years;
But oh, the suffering and the drouth,
 And the salt strange tears!

Come no more, come no more,
 Often I wake and moan,
While the heart of the sea, on the distant
 shore
 Breaks in the dark, alone.

Why wilt thou tear the deep old wound
 Open in sleep anew,
Oh lips that I have kissed and found
 So sweet and so untrue?

Nay come, love, come in dreams to me,
 I turn and weep again;
Thy far-off world misuseth thee!
 Thou art in pain, in pain!

THE VENUS OF MILO

I

BACKWARD she leans, as when the rose unblown
Slides white from its warm sheath some morn
in May!

Under the sloping waist, aslant, her zone
Clings as it slips in tender disarray;
One knee, out-thrust a little, keeps it so
Lingering ere it fall; her lovely face
Gazes as o'er her own Eternity!

Those armless radiant shoulders, long ago
Perchance held arms out wide with yearning
grace

For Adon by the blue Sicilian sea.

II

No; thou eternal fount of these poor gleams,
Bright axle-star of the wheeling temporal skies,

Daughter of blood and foam and deathless
dreams,

Mother of flying Love that never dies,

To thee, the topmost and consummate flower,

The last harmonic height, our dull desires

And our tired souls in dreary discord climb;

The flesh forgets its pale and wandering fires;

We gaze through heaven as from an ivory
tower

Shining upon the last dark shores of Time.

III

White culmination of the dreams of earth,

Thy splendour beacons to a loftier goal,

Where, slipping earthward from the great new
birth,

The shadowy senses leave the essential soul!

Oh, naked loveliness, not yet revealed,

A moment hence that falling robe will show

No prophecy like this, this great new dawn,
The bare bright breasts, each like a soft white
shield,
And the firm body like a slope of snow
Out of the slipping dream-stuff half with-
drawn.

THE SCULPTOR

THIS is my statue: cold and white
It stands and takes the morning light!
The world may flout my hopes and fears;
Yet was my life's work washed with tears
Of blood when this poor hand last night
Finished the pain of years.

Speak for me, patient lips of stone,
Blind eyes my lips have rested on
So often when the o'er-weary brain
Would grope to human love again
And found this grave cold mask alone,
And the tears fell like rain.

Ay; is this all? Is this the brow
I fondled, never wondering how

It lived — the face of pain and bliss
That through the marble met my kiss?
No, though the whole world praise it now,
Let no man dream it is!

They blame: they cannot blame aright
Who never knew what infinite
Deep loss must shame me most of all!
They praise: like earth their praises fall
Into a tomb. The hour of light
Is flown beyond recall.

Yet have I seen, yet have I known,
And oh, not tombed in cold white stone
The dream I lose on earth below;
And I shall come with face aglow
And find and claim it for my own
Before God's throne, I know.

VENUS DISROBING FOR THE BATH

OVER the firm young bosom's polished peaks
The thin white robe slips dimly as a dream
Slowly dissolving in the sun's first beam:
Far off the sad sea sighs and vainly seeks
The abandoned shell that bore her to the Greeks
When first she slumbered on the sea-blue
stream,
And in the dawn's first faint wild golden gleam
The white doves woke her with their soft red
beaks.

From breast to sunny thigh the light silk slips
On every rose-white curve and rounded slope
Pausing; and now it lies around her feet
In tiny clouds: now timidly she dips
One foot; the warm wave, shivering at her
sweet,
Kisses it with a murmur of wild hope.

THE SWIMMERS' RACE

I

BETWEEN the clover and the trembling sea
They stand upon the golden-shadowed shore
In naked boyish beauty, a strenuous three,
Hearing the breakers' deep Olympic roar ;
Three young athletes poised on a forward limb,
Mirrored like marble in the smooth wet sand,
Three statues moulded by Praxiteles :
The blue horizon rim
Recedes, recedes upon a lovelier land
And England melts into the skies of Greece.

II

The dome of heaven is like one drop of dew,
Quivering and clear and cloudless but for one
Crisp bouldered Alpine range that blinds the
blue

With snowy gorges glittering to the sun :
Forward the runners lean, with out-stretched
 hand
Waiting the word — ah, how the light relieves
 The silken rippling muscles as they start
 Spurning the yellow sand,
Then skimming lightlier till the goal receives
 The winner, head thrown back and lips
 apart.

III

Now at the sea-marge on the sand they lie
 At rest for a moment, panting as they breathe,
And gazing upward at the unbounded sky
 While the sand nestles round them from
 beneath ;
And in their hands they gather up the gold
 And through their fingers let it lazily stream
 Over them, dusking all their limbs' fair
 white,

Blotting their shape and mould,
Till, mixed into the distant gazer's dream
Of earth and heaven, they seem to sink
from sight.

IV

But one, in seeming petulance, oppressed
With heat has cast his brown young body
free:
With arms behind his head and heaving breast
He lies and gazes at the cool bright sea;
So young Leander might when in the noon
He panted for the starry eyes of eve
And whispered o'er the waste of wander-
ing waves,
'Hero, bid night come soon!'
Nor knew the nymphs were waiting to receive
And kiss his pale limbs in their cold sea-
caves.

V

Now to their feet they leap and, with a shout,
Plunge through the glittering breakers without fear,
Breast the green-arching billows, and still out,
As if each dreamed the arms of Hero near;
Now like three sunbeams on an emerald crest,
Now like three foam flakes melting out of sight,
They are blent with all the glory of all the sea;
One with the golden West;
Merged in a myriad waves of mystic light
As life is lost in immortality.

FORTY SINGING SEAMEN

“In our lande be Beeres and Lyons of dyvers colours as ye redd, grene, black and white. And in our land be also unicornes and these Unicornes slee many Lyons. . . . Also there dare no man make a lye in our lande, for if he dyde he sholde incontynent be sleyn.”

— Mediæval Epistle of Pope Prester John.

I

ACROSS the seas of Wonderland to Mogadore we
plodded,

Forty singing seamen in an old black barque,
And we landed in the twilight where a Poly-
phemus nodded

With his battered moon-eye winking red and
yellow through the dark !

For his eye was growing mellow,

Rich and ripe and red and yellow,
As was time, since old Ulysses made him
bellow in the dark!

Cho. — Since Ulysses bunged his eye up with a
pine-torch in the dark!

II

Were they mountains in the gloaming or the
giant's ugly shoulders

Just beneath the rolling eye-ball, with its
bleared and vinous glow,

Red and yellow o'er the purple of the pines
among the boulders

And the shaggy horror brooding on the sullen
slopes below,

Were they pines among the boulders

Or the hair upon his shoulders?

We were only simple seamen, so of course we
didn't know.

Cho. — We were simple singing seamen, so of course we couldn't know.

III

But we crossed a plain of poppies, and we came
upon a fountain

Not of water, but of jewels, like a spray of
leaping fire;

And behind it, in an emerald glade, beneath
a golden mountain

There stood a crystal palace, for a sailor to
admire;

For a troop of ghosts came round us,

Which with leaves of bay they crowned
us,

Then with grog they well-nigh drowned us, to
the depth of our desire!

Cho. — And 'twas very friendly of them, as a
sailor can admire!

IV

There was music all about us, we were growing
quite forgetful

We were only singing seamen from the dirt of
London-town,

Though the nectar that we swallowed seemed to
vanish half regretful

As if we wasn't good enough to take such
vittles down,

When we saw a sudden figure,

Tall and black as any nigger,

Like the devil — only bigger — drawing near
us with a frown!

Cho. — Like the devil — but much bigger — and
he wore a golden crown!

V

And 'what's all this?' he growls at us! With
dignity we chaunted,

'Forty singing seamen, sir, as won't be put
upon!'

'What? Englishmen?' he cries, 'Well, if ye
don't mind being haunted,

Faith, you're welcome to my palace; I'm
the famous Prester John!

Will ye walk into my palace?

I don't bear 'ee any malice!

One and all ye shall be welcome in the halls
of Prester John!

Cho. — So we walked into the palace and the
halls of Prester John!

VI

Now the door was one great diamond and the
hall a hollow ruby —

Big as Beachy Head, my lads, nay bigger by a
half!

And I sees the mate wi' mouth agape, a-staring
like a booby

And the skipper close behind him, with his
tongue out like a calf!

Now the way to take it rightly

Was to walk along politely

Just as if you didn't notice — so I couldn't
help but laugh!

Cho. — For they both forgot their manners and
the crew was bound to laugh!

VII

But he took us through his palace and, my
lads, as I'm a sinner,

We walked into an opal like a sunset-coloured
cloud —

'My dining room,' he says, and, quick as light
we saw a dinner

Spread before us by the fingers of a hidden
fairy crowd;

And the skipper, swaying gently

After dinner, murmurs faintly,

‘I looks to-wards you, Prester John, you’ve
done us very proud!’

Cho. — And we drank his health with honours,
for he *done* us *very* proud!

VIII

Then he walks us to his garden where we sees a
feathered demon

Very splendid and important on a sort of
spicy tree!

‘That’s the Phœnix,’ whispers Prester, ‘which
all eddicated seamen

Knows the only one existent, and *he’s* waiting
for to flee!

When his hundred years expire

Then he’ll set hissself a-fire

And another from his ashes rise most beautiful
to see!’

Cho. — With wings of rose and emerald most
beautiful to see!

IX

Then he says, 'In yonder forest there's a little
silver river

And whosoever drinks of it, his youth shall
never die!

The centuries go by, but Prester John endures
for ever

With his music in the mountains and his magic
on the sky!

While *your* hearts are growing colder,

While your world is growing older,

There's a magic in the distance, where the
sealine meets the sky.'

Cho. — It shall call to singing seamen till the
fount o' song is dry!

X

So we thought we'd up and seek it, but that
forest fair defied us —

First a crimson leopard laughs at us most
horrible to see,

Then a sea-green lion came and sniffed and
licked his chops and eyed us,

While a red and yellow unicorn was dancing
round a tree!

We was trying to look thinner,

Which was hard, because our dinner

Must ha' made us very tempting to a cat o'
high degree!

Cho. — Must ha' made us very tempting to the
whole menarjeree!

XI

So we scuttled from that forest and across the
poppy-meadows

Where the awful shaggy horror brooded o'er
us in the dark!

And we pushes out from shore again a-jumping
at our shadows

And pulls away most joyful to the old black
barque!

And home again we plodded

While the Polyphemus nodded

With his battered moon-eye winking red and
yellow through the dark.

Cho. — Oh, the moon above the mountains,
red and yellow through the dark!

XII

Across the seas of Wonderland to London-town
we blundered,

Forty singing seamen as was puzzled for to
know

If the visions that we saw was caused by —
here again we pondered —

A tippie in a vision forty thousand years ago.

Could the grog we *dreamt* we swallowed

Make us *dream* of all that followed?

We were only simple seamen, so of course we

didn't know!

Cho. — We were simple singing seamen, so of

course we could not know!

THE BARREL-ORGAN

THERE'S a barrel-organ carolling across a golden
street

In the City as the sun sinks low;
And the music's not immortal; but the world
has made it sweet

And fulfilled it with the sunset glow;
And it pulses through the pleasures of the City
and the pain

That surround the singing organ like a large
eternal light;
And they've given it a glory and a part to play
again

In the Symphony that rules the day and night.

And now it's marching onward through the
realms of old romance,

And trolling out a fond familiar tune,
And now it's roaring cannon down to fight the
 King of France,
And now it's prattling softly to the moon,
And all around the organ there's a sea without
 a shore
Of human joys and wonders and regrets;
To remember and to recompense the music ever-
 more
For what the cold machinery forgets. . . .

Yes; as the music changes,
 Like a prismatic glass,
It takes the light and ranges
 Through all the moods that pass;
Dissects the common carnival
 Of passions and regrets,
And gives the world a glimpse of all
 The colours it forgets.

And there *La Traviata* sighs
Another sadder song;
And there *Il Trovatore* cries
A tale of deeper wrong;
And bolder knights to battle go
With sword and shield and lance,
Than ever here on earth below
Have whirled into — *a dance!* —

Go down to Kew in lilac-time, in lilac-time, in
lilac-time;

Go down to Kew in lilac-time (it isn't far from
London!)

And you shall wander hand in hand with love in
summer's wonderland;

Go down to Kew in lilac-time (it isn't far from
London!)

The cherry-trees are seas of bloom and soft per-
fume and sweet perfume,

The cherry-trees are seas of bloom (and oh, so
near to London !)

And there they say, when dawn is high and all
the world's a blaze of sky

The cuckoo, though he's very shy, will sing a
song for London.

The nightingale is rather rare and yet they say
you'll hear him there

At Kew, at Kew in lilac-time (and oh, so near
to London !)

The linnet and the throstle, too, and after dark
the long halloo

And golden-eyed *tu-whit*, *tu-whoo* of owls that
ogle London.

For Noah hardly knew a bird of any kind that
isn't heard

At Kew, at Kew in lilac-time (and oh, so near
to London !)

And when the rose begins to pout and all the
chestnut spires are out

You'll hear the rest without a doubt, all
chorussing for London : —

*Come down to Kew in lilac-time, in lilac-time, in
lilac-time ;*

*Come down to Kew in lilac-time (it isn't far from
London !)*

*And you shall wander hand in hand with love in
summer's wonderland ;*

*Come down to Kew in lilac-time (it isn't far from
London !)*

And then the troubadour begins to thrill the
golden street,

In the City as the sun sinks low ;

And in all the gaudy busses there are scores of
weary feet

Marking time, sweet time, with a dull mechanic
beat,

And a thousand hearts are plunging to a love
they'll never meet,

Through the meadows of the sunset, through the
poppies and the wheat,

In the land where the dead dreams go.

Verdi, Verdi, when you wrote *Il Trovatore* did
you dream

Of the City when the sun sinks low,

Of the organ and the monkey and the many-
coloured stream

On the Piccadilly pavement, of the myriad eyes
that seem

To be litten for a moment with a wild Italian
gleam

As *A che la morte* parodies the world's eternal
theme

And pulses with the sunset-glow?

There's a thief, perhaps, that listens with a face
of frozen stone

In the City as the sun sinks low;

There's a portly man of business with a balance
of his own,

There's a clerk and there's a butcher of a soft
reposeful tone,

And they're all of them returning to the heavens
they have known:

They are crammed and jammed in busses and —
they're each of them alone

In the land where the dead dreams go.

There's a very modish woman and her smile is
very bland

In the City as the sun sinks low;

And her hansom jingles onward, but her little
jewelled hand

Is clenched a little tighter and she cannot under-
stand

What she wants or why she wanders to that un-
discovered land,

For the parties there are not at all the sort of
thing she planned,

In the land where the dead dreams go.

There's an Oxford man that listens and his heart
is crying out

In the City as the sun sinks low;

For the barge, the eight, the Isis, and the coach's
whoop and shout,

For the minute-gun, the counting and the long
dishevelled rout,

For the howl along the tow-path and a fate that's
still in doubt,

For a roughened oar to handle and a race to
think about

In the land where the dead dreams go.

There's a labourer that listens to the voices of
the dead

In the City as the sun sinks low ;

And his hand begins to tremble and his face is
rather red

As he sees a loafer watching him and — there he
turns his head

And stares into the sunset where his April love is
fled,

For he hears her softly singing and his lonely soul
is led

Through the land where the dead dreams go.

There's an old and haggard demi-rep, it's ringing
in her ears,

In the City as the sun sinks low ;

With the wild and empty sorrow of the love that
 blights and sears,
Oh, and if she hurries onward, then be sure, be
 sure she hears,
Hears and bears the bitter burden of the unfor-
 gotten years,
And her laugh's a little harsher and her eyes are
 brimmed with tears
For the land where the dead dreams go.

There's a barrel-organ carolling across a golden
 street
In the City as the sun sinks low ;
Though the music's only Verdi there's a world to
 make it sweet
Just as yonder yellow sunset where the earth and
 heaven meet
Mellows all the sooty City! Hark, a hundred
 thousand feet

Are marching on to glory through the poppies
and the wheat

In the land where the dead dreams go.

So it's Jeremiah, Jeremiah,

What have you to say

When you meet the garland girls

Tripping on their way?

All around my gala hat

I wear a wreath of roses

(A long and lonely year it is

I've waited for the May !)

If any one should ask you,

The reason why I wear it is —

My own love, my true love is coming home
to-day.

And it's buy a bunch of violets for the lady

*(It's lilac-time in London; it's lilac-time in
London !)*

Buy a bunch of violets for the lady;

While the sky burns blue above:

On the other side the street you'll find it shady

*(It's lilac-time in London; it's lilac-time in
London!)*

But buy a bunch of violets for the lady,

And tell her she's your own true love.

There's a barrel-organ carolling across a golden
street

In the City as the sun sinks glittering and slow;
And the music's not immortal; but the world
has made it sweet

And enriched it with the harmonies that make
a song complete

In the deeper heavens of music where the night
and morning meet,

As it dies into the sunset glow;

And it pulses through the pleasures of the City
and the pain

That surround the singing organ like a large
eternal light,

And they've given it a glory and a part to play
again

In the Symphony that rules the day and night.

And there, as the music changes,

The song runs round again ;

Once more it turns and ranges

Through all its joy and pain :

Dissects the common carnival

Of passions and regrets ;

And the wheeling world remembers all

The wheeling song forgets.

Once more *La Traviata* sighs

Another sadder song :

Once more *Il Trovatore* cries
A tale of deeper wrong;
Once more the knights to battle go
With sword and shield and lance
Till once, once more, the shattered foe
Has whirled into — *a dance!*

*Come down to Kew in lilac-time, in lilac-time, in
lilac-time;*

*Come down to Kew in lilac-time (it isn't far from
London!)*

*And you shall wander hand in hand with Love in
summer's wonderland,*

*Come down to Kew in lilac-time (it isn't far from
London!)*

Her face leaned out and took the sacred glow
Of evening, like the star that listened, high
Above the gold clouds of the western sky.

Was there no prince behind her in the gloom,
No crimson shadow of his rich array?

Her face leaned down to me: I saw the tears
Bleed through her eyes with the slow pain of
years,

And her mouth yearned to say —

‘Friend, is there any message, from the tomb
Where love lies buried?’ But she only said—
‘Oh, friend, canst thou not save me from my
dead?’

‘Canst thou not minister to a soul in pain?

Or hast thou then no comfortable word?

Is there no faith in thee wherewith to atone

For his unfaith who left me here alone,

Heart-sick with hope deferred;

Oh, since my love will never come again,
Bring'st thou no respite through the desolate
years,
Respite from these most unavailing tears?'

Then saw I, and mine own tears made response,
Her woman's heart come breaking through her
eyes;

And, as I stood beneath the tower's grey
wall,

She let the soft waves of her deep hair fall
Like flowers from Paradise

Over my fevered face: then all at once
Pity was passion; and like a sea of bliss
Those waves rolled o'er me drowning for her
kiss.

* * * * *

Seven years we dwelt together in that tower,
Seven years in that old palace by the sea,

And sitting at that casement, side by side,
She told me all her pain : how love had died

Now for all else but me ;

Yet how she had loved that other : like a flower
Her red lips parted and with low sweet moan
She pressed their tender suffering on mine
own.

And always with vague eyes she gazed afar,
Out through the casement o'er the changing
tide ;

And slowly was my heart's hope brought to
nought

That some day I should win each wandering
thought

And make her my soul's bride :

Still, still she gazed across the cold sea-bar ;

Ay ; with her hand in mine, still, still and pale,

Waited and watched for the unreturning sail.

And I, too, watched and waited as the years

 Rolled on; and slowly was I brought to feel
How on my lips she met her lover's kiss,
How my heart's pulse begat an alien bliss;

 And cold and hard as steel
For me those eyes were, though their tender
 tears

 Were salt upon my cheek; and then one
 night

 I saw a sail come through the pale moonlight.

And like an alien ghost I stole away,

 And like a breathing lover he returned;
And in the woods I dwelt, or sometimes crept
Out in the grey dawn while the lovers slept
 And the great sea-tides yearned

Against the iron shores; and faint and grey
 The tower and the shut casement rose above:
And on the earth I sobbed out all my love.

At last, one royal rose-hung night in June,
When the warm air like purple Hippocrene
Brimmed the dim valley and sparkled into
stars,

I saw them cross the foam-lit sandy bars
And dark pools, glimmering green,
To bathe beneath the honey-coloured moon:
I saw them swim out from that summer shore,
Kissed by the sea, but they returned no more.

* * * * *

And into the dark palace, like a dream
Remembered after long oblivious years,
Through the strange open doors I crept and saw
As some poor pagan might, with reverent awe,
And deep adoring tears,
The moonlight through that painted window
stream
Over the soft wave of their vacant bed;
There sank I on my knees and bowed my head.

For as a father by a cradle bows,

Remembering two dead children of his own,
I knelt; and by the cry of the great deep
Their love seemed like a murmuring in their
sleep,

A little fevered moan,

A little tossing of childish arms that shows

How dreams go by! 'If I were God,' I wept,
'I would have pity on children while they
slept.'

* * * * *

The days, the months, the years drift over me;

This is my habitation till I die:

Nothing is changed; they left that open book
Beside the window. Did he sit and look

Up at her face as I

Looked while she read it, and the enchanted sea
With rich eternities of love unknown
Fulfilled the low sweet music of her tone?

So did he listen, looking in her face?

And did she ever pause, remembering so
The heart that bore the whole weight of her pain
Until her own heart's love returned again?

In the still evening glow
I sit and listen in this quiet place,
And only hear — like notes of phantom birds—
Their perished kisses and little broken words.

*Come to the haunted palace of my dreams,
My crumbling palace by the eternal sea,
Which, like a childless mother, still must croon
Her ancient sorrows to the cold white moon,
Or, ebbing tremulously,
With one pale arm, where the long foam-fringe
gleams,
Will gather her rustling garments, for a space
Of muffled weeping, round her dim white face.*

SILK O' THE KINE

A TALE OF THE ISLES

I

*EILIDH,¹ Eilidh, Silk o' the Kine;
Happy is he whose hand shall twine
Thy warm wild beauty of shadow and shine.*

*Like the glossy waves of a golden sea,
Eilidh, thy deep hair covers thee;
Oh, Eilidh, Eilidh, a deep, deep sea,
A golden sea,
A deep, deep sea.*

¹ *Eilidh*, pronounced *Isle-y*

II

Heather-drowsy, heather-drowsy, lapped in the
sunlight together,

Eilidh and Isla lay one day in the golden summer
weather.

For the silken sea of her golden hair and its
billows of shadow and shine

Had Sorch the Singer named her, Eilidh — Silk
o' the Kine;

And the laughing lovers were cradled in clouds
of purple and gold,

As round their couch in the heather it rippled
and glistened and rolled.

And the honey-sweet air was wild with the warble
of birds and the whisper of rills;

And the wind blew soft and sweet with the scent
of the bloom of a thousand hills;

And a myriad twinkling smiles awoke in the
dreamy blue of the bay,

For, far and far above them, Eilidh and Isla
lay;

And her hand lay warm in his clasping hand;
two young lovers were they:

Two young lovers were they.

III

Many a floating butterfly and yellow-banded bee,
Wondering and blundering across the blissful
hours,

Paused o'er Eilidh's fragrant hair as it tumbled
soft and free,

Dreaming and gleaming, a glossy golden sea
That rolled a happy kiss-deep among the heather-
flowers.

Her eyes were deeper than the skies that arch
the sunny South;

The gipsy sun had kissed her cheek and a rose
had kissed her mouth;

Her breast was like a blossoming wave that
curves in a sea of bliss,

As she leaned her golden head far back and
turned her closing eyes

Brimmed with the joy of life and love to the
cloudless azure skies,

And the rosy golden apple of her throat to his
following kiss.

And she laughed the low sweet laugh of love
and thought of the crimson fray

That raged on the soft blue waters beyond the
dreaming bay;

She laughed the low sweet laugh of love that
kept her lover bound

Safe to her breast as round his breast her white
arms clung and wound.

She had prayed him and stayed him, with the
sword at his side;

And her laugh had conquered all the calls of
glory and pride :

For her own love and her true love she held him
safely there ;

It was only one away to them, but all the world
to her.

She had pleaded ; she would die with him ; they
were so young to die ;

She had pleaded ; she had conquered, with one
last low broken cry :

So now she leaned her head far back with the
perfect laugh of love ;

And the blossoms murmured round her and the
skies grew dim above :

Her arm was round her true love's neck and her
hand was in his hand ;

And her heart against his heart that day in the
silent summer-land.

And the sun sank down to the waiting smiles
that wrinkled the blue of the bay ;

And a shadow covered the warm sweet hill where
Eilidh and Isla lay;

But her hand lay warm in his clasp
two young lovers were they:

Two young lovers were they.

IV

The sun sank down and the darkness covered
the torn red ships,

As over the dark blue sea they ploughed trium-
phantly home;

And the warriors lay and panted with the battle-
surf on their lips;

And the moon slunk out above them in a menac-
ing cloud of eclipse;

And a mutter of distant thunder crept o'er the
wandering foam.

Then the King stood up in the blood-stained
prow of the *Raven* and said,

"Who saved my life in the battle? He shall take
to-night for his own

The Flower of the island women, a maiden, a
queen to his bed;

With a sword, if they will, between them; but
he shall not lie alone.

Who saved my life in the battle?" And the
warriors with one breath

Answered: "Cormic Achanna; he saved the life
of the King!"

When he slipped in the bloody grapple and
screamed at the feet of death

Achanna stood over the body and cleared a
terrible ring,

Wheeling his battle-axe round him and shouting
his own death-song;

For he deemed that fight was his last; but the
red blood splashed in his face

And the laughing madness was on him: there
was no hell so strong

As the joy of the last great battle to the gloom
of his ancient race.

"*Who is the Flower of our women?*" And Sorch
the Singer rose

And touched his harp and sang as the ships
went over the sea :

"Every star in the deep dim skies and every wind
that blows

Has heard the name of Eilidh and the song it
made for me ;

Oh, fair as the fairest rose on earth her flower-
sweet face shall be,

This night of nights, oh star of the battle, this
night of nights for thee ;

This night of nights for thee."

V

Eilidh, Eilidh, Silk o' the Kine,

Happy is he whose hand shall twine

Thy warm wild beauty of shadow and shine.

*Eilidh, thy deep hair covers thee,
Like the glossy waves of a golden sea;
Oh, Eilidh, Eilidh, the sea is deep
That holds thy gold in its emerald keep.*

This was the song that Sorch the Singer
Made one day as he saw her linger
 Bathing in the dazzled sea
 And looking backward wistfully
 Over its infinite mystery;
With the cool white foam in the noonday heat
Murmuring sweetness over the sweet
Golden light of her golden feet,
 And her deep hair shimmering down to her
 knee.

For once in the warm blue summer weather
He lay with his harp in the deep sweet heather,
 And watched her white limbs glimmer and
 gleam

Out, far out, through the sea's eternal dream,
Swimming, with one bright arm like a wild
sunbeam
Flashing and cleaving the warm wild emerald tide
That trembled and murmured and sobbed at her
naked side,
And folded and moulded her beauty in sun-soft
gold,
And swooned at her sweetness, and swiftly revived
into cold
Clear currents of emerald rapture, again and again
Scattered a glory of kisses around her that broke
into rainbows and rain,
As over and under her blossoming breasts they
rippled and glistened and rolled.

VI

*Eilidh, Eilidh, Silk o' the Kine,
Happy is he whose hand shall twine
Thy glossy beauty of shadow and shine.*

Eilidh, thy deep hair covers thee

Like the warm wild waves of a golden sea ;

Oh, Eilidh, Eilidh, a deep, deep sea,

A golden sea,

A deep, deep sea.

The King stood up in the crimson glow that
gloomed in the feasting hall,

“Achanna, to-night our island Rose, our Rose
of the World is thine :”

And the smoky red of the rolling fire danced on
the painted wall ;

As she came through the midst of them, trem-
bling, Eilidh, Silk o' the Kine :

She came — oh, white as a star when the moon
is all in eclipse,

Through the broad-flung oak-rough limbs of the
warriors waiting the feast,

With the blackening blood on their hands and a
mutter of song on their lips,

And the hell still hot in their eyes, though the
heavy panting had ceased.

And the King laughed out: "Oh, Eilidh, go to
Achanna thy lord,
Gladden his heart with thy beauty, take his hand
in thine own;
To-night if he will you shall lay between you a
two-edged sword,
But when the drinking is over he shall not lie
alone."

And she stared in the face of the King as if in a
dream she had heard

The voice of Isla her lover vainly trying to speak;
And her red lips curved and struggled like the
wings of a wounded bird, —

"Oh King, I am plighted," she whispered, and
the rose awoke in her cheek.

“Plighted!” he answered her roughly, with a
thunder-cloud on his brow,

For what was a maiden troth to him but a kiss
of the flying hours?

“Plighted, Eilidh, Silk o’ the Kine — by God!
you are plighted now

By more than the babble of lovers asleep on a
bank of flowers.”

“Plighted,” she answered slowly. “Oh King,
my love is my own,

And none can take it from me, not life, nor death,
nor doom;

I am plighted, oh King,” her low voice broke in a
slow deep moan,

“I am plighted, oh King, plighted, by the child
that moves in my womb.”

Then the King arose in his fury, and he saw that
her girdle was wried, —

“By God! you shall die together or tell me your
lover's name :

His child shall be born in your anguish and
clutch at your writhen side ;

Mother and child, you shall burn together, one
torch in one shrieking flame.

Tell me the name of the man!” The King's
voice rang through the hall ;

Then all was hushed, and never a whisper broke
through the gloom

From the hard red lips of Eilidh where she stood
before them all,

Proud and peerless and silent, awaiting the word
of doom.

“Tell me the name of the man!” and the great
doors opened wide,

And through the sprawling limbs of the feasters
a light foot sped ;

And suddenly Eilidh laughed out loud, for Isla
was there at her side,

And her hand lay warm in his clasping hand;
and she lifted her beautiful head

High in the triumph of love that knows there is
nothing to fear,

Now, in life or death, in earth or heaven or hell,
When the coil of the world is conquered and the
very God draws near,

And touches the eyes of the soul with light, and
whispers "All is well."

And all was well with Isla; for now in the world's
despite

The ache of remorse was over, and all the glory
and pride

Of the earthly battle had vanished in the dawn
of the boundless night,

And he stood with his love in the shadow of death
as a bridegroom with a bride.

Then all the crimson glow of the hall was hushed
once more,

And Eilidh looked into Isla's face as they waited
the word of death,

And only they heard, far off, on the desolate rock-
bound shore,

The sea like a peaceful sleeper drawing a slow
deep breath ;

Till as a tiger snarls with his foot on the bleeding
prey

Slowly the savage lips of the King curled back
and hissed :

“To-night you are ready to die ; but to-night
you shall go your way,

And dream of the death that is ready to feed
on the mouth you have kissed.

To-night you shall go to your lover and feed your
love to the fill :

You shall play with his bleeding heart at dawn
before he burns at the stake ;

Then Gloom Achanna shall take you for a night
or a moon, if he will ;

Go!" and the hall was hushed once more till
they heard the great sea break
Like a distant host of ransomed souls rushing
away into peace,
Rushing away from the body of death in the last
supreme release,
As Eilidh and Isla, hand in hand, passed through
the silent hall,
Hand in hand through the gaping doors and into
the starry light.
But Gloom Achanna envied Isla the love of that
last brief night,
For he knew by the glory of Eilidh's eyes that
love had conquered all.

VI

Never a boat could leave that isle for its watchful
midnight guard;
But, when with isles of rose and green the golden
east was barred,

A trembling herdsman came to the King at the
dreadful break of day,

And said that, passing the hut in the heather
where Eilidh and Isla lay,

He thought to see them clasped and kissed in the
waves of her golden hair,

But the door was wide to the wind and the sea;
and only death was there.

For their couch of tawny fawn-skins was smoking
wet and red;

And Gloom Achanna was huddled across it,
haggard and warm and dead,

With the coverlet of the lovers for his reeking
purple pall,

And the dagger of Eilidh deep in his heart, and
the red sun over all.

Then Sorch the Singer came to the King as he
stared in empty amaze

And said, "Oh King, as I watched the sun break
through the first gold haze,

I saw those lovers pass to the shore, hand in
clasping hand;

And they cast their raiment from them there on
the golden sand;

And they waded up to their golden knees in the
clear green waves, and there,

Clothed with the sun and the warm soft wind
and Eilidh's golden hair,

Isla broke his sword and watched it heavily
shimmering down

Through the lustrous emerald gleam to the sea-
flower forests of dim deep brown.

And they kissed each other, once, on the mouth,
and then, as I stood in the heather,

I saw them, Eilidh and Isla, they swam out in the
sunlight together:

Out, far out, through the golden glory that
dazzled the green of the bay:

Two strong swimmers were they, oh King, that
swam out in the sunlight together;

Whether they went to life or death, two strong
swimmers were they:

Two strong swimmers were they."

IN THE HEART OF THE WOODS

HEART of me, Heart of me, Heart of me, beating,
beating afar,

In the glamour and gloom of the night, in the
light of the rosy star,

In the cold sweet voice of the bird, in the sigh
of the flower-soft sea,

Sure the Heart of the woods is the Heart of
Eternity,

Ah! and the passionate heart it is of you and
me.

Love of me, Love of me, linking the world and
the golden moon,

And the flowery moths that flutter through the
scented heat of noon,

And the soul of man with beauty, youth with the
dreaming night

Of stars and flowers and waters and breasts of
glimmering white,

And streaming hair of fragrant dusk and flying
limbs of lovely light.

Life of me, Life of me, shining in sun and cloud
and wind,

In the dark eyes of the fawn and the eyes of the
hound behind,

In the leaves that lie in the seed unsown, and the
dream of the babe unborn,

I feel you pulsing like flame of blood through
flower and root and thorn,

I feel you burning the boughs of night to kindle
the fires of morn.

Soul of me, Soul of me, yearning wherever a
laverock sings

Or the leafy gloom is winnowed by the whirr of
 linnets' wings,

Or the spray of the foam-bow rustles in the white
 dawn of the moon,

And mournful billows moan aloud, *Come soon,*
 soon, soon,

Come soon, oh Death, with the heart of love and the
 secret of the rune.

Heart of me, Heart of me, Heart of me, beating,
 beating afar,

In the green gloom of the night, in the light of
 the rosy star,

In the cold sweet voice of the bird, in the sigh of
 the flower-soft sea,

Sure the Heart of the woods is the Heart of the
 world and the Heart of Eternity,

Ay, and the passionate Heart it is of you and me.

SONG OF HANRAHAN THE RED

OH, Death will never find us in the heart of the
wood,

The song is in my blood, night and day ;

We will pluck a scented petal from the Rose upon
the Rood

Where Love lies bleeding on the way ;

We will listen to the linnet and watch the waters
leap,

When the clouds go dreaming by,

And under the wild roses and the stars we will
sleep

And wander on together, you and I.

We shall understand the mystery that none has
understood,

We shall know why the leafy gloom is green ;
Oh, Death will never find us in the heart of the
wood

When we see what the stars have seen ;
We have heard the hidden song of the soft dews
falling

At the end of the last dark sky,
Where all the sorrows of the world are call-
ing,

We must wander on together, you and I.

They are calling, calling, Away, come away,
And we know not whence they call ;
For the song is in our hearts, we hear it night
and day,

As the deep tides rise and fall :

Oh, Death will never find us in the heart of the
wood,

While the hours and the years roll by ;

We have heard it, we have heard it, but we have
not understood,

We must wander on together, you and I.

The wind may beat upon us, the rain may blind
our eyes,

The leaves may fall beneath the winter's wing;
But we shall hear the music of the dream that
never dies;

And we shall know the secret of the spring;
We shall know how all the blossoms of evil and
of good

Are mingled in the meadows of the sky;
And then — if Death can find us in the heart of
the wood,

We shall wander on together, you and I.

LOVE'S ROSARY

ALL day I tell my rosary
For now my love's away :
To-morrow he shall come to me
About the break of day ;
A rosary of twenty hours,
And then a rose of May ;
A rosary of fettered flowers,
And then a holy-day.

All day I tell my rosary,
My rosary of hours :
And here's a flower of memory,
And here's a hope of flowers,
And here's an hour that yearns with pain
For old forgotten years,

An hour of loss, an hour of gain,
And then a shower of tears.

All day I tell my rosary,
Because my love's away ;
And never a whisper comes to me,
And never a word to say ;
But, if it's parting more endears,
God bring him back, I pray ;
Or my heart will break in the darkness
Before the break of day.

All day I tell my rosary,
My rosary of hours,
Until an hour shall bring to me
The hope of all the flowers. . . .
I tell my rosary of hours,
For O, my love's away ;
And — a dream may bring him back to me
About the break of day.

PIRATES

COME to me, you with the laughing face, in
the night as I lie

Dreaming of days that are dead and of joys gone
by;

Come to me, comrade, come through the slow
dropping rain,

Come from your grave in the darkness and let us
be playmates again.

Let us be boys together to-night, and pretend as
of old

We are pirates at rest in a cave among huge
heaps of gold,

Red Spanish doubloons and great pieces of eight,
and muskets and swords,

And a smoky red camp-fire to glint, you know
how, on our ill-gotten hoards.

The old cave in the fir-wood that slopes down
the hills to the sea

Still is haunted, perhaps, by young pirates as
wicked as we :

Though the fir with the magpie's big mud-plas-
tered nest used to hide it so well,

And the boys in the gang had to swear that they
never would tell.

Ah, that tree ; I have sat in its boughs and looked
seaward for hours ;

I remember the creak of its branches ; the scent
of the flowers

That climbed round the mouth of the cave : it
is odd I recall

Those little things best, that I scarcely took heed
of at all.

I remember how brightly the brass on the butt
of my spy-glass gleamed

As I climbed through the purple heather and
thyme to our eyrie and dreamed;

I remember the smooth glossy sun-burn that
darkened our faces and hands

As we gazed at the merchantmen sailing away
to those wonderful lands.

I remember the long long sigh of the sea as we
raced in the sun,

To dry ourselves after our swimming; and how
we would run

With a cry and a crash through the foam as it
creamed on the shore,

Then back to bask in the warm dry gold of the
sand once more.

Come to me; you with the laughing face; in the
gloom as I lie

Dreaming of days that are dead and of joys gone
by;

Let us be boys together to-night and pretend as
of old

We are pirates at rest in a cave among great
heaps of gold.

Come; you shall be chief: we'll not quarrel:
the time flies so fast:

There are ships to be grappled, there's blood to
be shed, ere our playtime be past:

No; perhaps we *will* quarrel, just once, or it
scarcely will seem

So like the old days that have flown from us
both like a dream.

Still; you shall be chief in the end; and then
we'll go home

To the hearth and the tea and the books that we
loved: ah, but come,

Come to me, come through the dark and the slow-
dropping rain ;

Come, old friend, come from your grave and let
us be playmates again.

SHERWOOD

SHERWOOD in the twilight, is Robin Hood awake?
Grey and ghostly shadows are gliding through
 the brake;
Shadows of the dappled deer, dreaming of the
 morn,
Dreaming of a shadowy man that winds a shadowy
 horn.

Robin Hood is here again: all his merry thieves,
Hear a ghostly bugle-note shivering through the
 leaves,
Calling as he used to call, faint and far away,
In Sherwood, in Sherwood, about the break of
 day.

Merry, merry England has kissed the lips of
June:

All the wings of fairyland were here beneath the
moon;

Like a flight of rose-leaves fluttering in a mist
Of opal and ruby and pearl and amethyst.

Merry, merry England is waking as of old,
With eyes of blither hazel and hair of brighter
gold:

For Robin Hood is here again beneath the burst-
ing spray
In Sherwood, in Sherwood, about the break of
day.

Love is in the greenwood building him a house
Of wild rose and hawthorn and honeysuckle
boughs:

Love is in the greenwood: dawn is in the skies;

And Marian is waiting with a glory in her
eyes.

Hark! The dazzled laverock climbs the golden
steep:

Marian is waiting: is Robin Hood asleep?

Round the fairy grass-rings frolic elf and fay,
In Sherwood, in Sherwood, about the break of
day.

Oberon, Oberon, rake away the gold,
Rake away the red leaves, roll away the mould,
Rake away the gold leaves, roll away the red,
And wake Will Scarlett from his leafy forest bed.

Friar Tuck and Little John are riding down
together

With quarter-staff and drinking-can and grey
goose-feather;

The dead are coming back again ; the years are
rolled away

In Sherwood, in Sherwood, about the break of
day.

Softly over Sherwood the south wind blows ;
All the heart of England hid in every rose
Hears across the greenwood the sunny whisper
leap,

Sherwood in the red dawn, is Robin Hood
asleep ?

Hark, the voice of England wakes him as of old
And, shattering the silence with a cry of brighter
gold,

Bugles in the greenwood echo from the steep,
Sherwood in the red dawn, is Robin Hood asleep ?

Where the deer are gliding down the shadowy
glen

All across the glades of fern he calls his merry
men;

Doublets of the Lincoln green glancing through
the May

In Sherwood, in Sherwood, about the break of
day;

Calls them and they answer: from aisles of oak
and ash

Rings the *Follow! Follow!* and the boughs begin
to crash;

The ferns begin to flutter and the flowers begin
to fly;

And through the crimson dawning the robber
band goes by.

Robin! Robin! Robin! All his merry thieves
Answer as the bugle-note shivers through the
leaves:

Calling as he used to call, faint and far
away,

In Sherwood, in Sherwood, about the break of
day.

STATESMEN

QUIETER than the sun is he
Whose task is mightier to perform,
And needs the primal majesty
Of strength that rules the storm.

The great prophetic heart is his,
The poet's power to bless and blend
Life with the cosmic harmonies
That roll to one great end.

Ah, yet not his to seek or roam
The undiscovered and sublime;
But how to bring his good ship home
Across the seas of Time.

His course must veer with every wind,
 Yet is the swiftest and the best
His wisdom of the sea can find ;
 And God will add the rest.

The statesman looks not where the wave
 Of momentary detail swirled ;
His hope is deeper than the grave
 And wider than the world.

His hands upon the wheel deny
 The wild demands of circumstance ;
His eyes are on the distant sky
 Beyond the clouds of chance :

And when, still beating up the wind,
 He slowly brings the Ship of State
Home, though the people chafe to find
 How dark it is and late ;

With all his tacking courses run
At last beyond the roaring sea,
Men find him faithful to the one
Haven where they would be.

Far other he whose words are free
To flatter weakness and conform;
And help a drunken crew to flee
Full sail before the storm;

He scans the rainbow in the wave
And dazzling spray around him hurled;
Their light will last him till his grave
Obliterates his world.

His hands upon the wheel reply
To every call of circumstance;
He chases down the reeling sky
The rushing clouds of chance.

He spreads before the boisterous wind
The wild white wings of the Ship of State;
While all the people cheer to find
The sails crash and inflate.

Before the uproarious wind they run
Out, out into the hungry sea;
How fast! And, when that day is done,
How far, O God, from hope and Thee.

BLACKBERRIES

OUT of the sunny field they passed
And sought the leafy shade ;
A farmer's boy with laughing lips,
A barefoot village maid.

Her lips were blue with blackberries,
Her finger-tips were red ;
And "What shall take the stain away
This day at all?" she said.

He's pulled the rose from out his coat,
And it was fully blown ;
He's heard the song the linnet sang,
And they were all alone.

It was a white rose took the stain
From her dainty finger-tips;
But, O, it was a redder flower
Grew purple at her lips.

THE WOMAN-SOUL

THEY stood before the fiery Gate,
 With hearts and lips afire,
To triumph over fear and fate
 For the dream of his desire;
"O love," he said, and bowed his head
 To meet her sacred kiss,
"This is the hour that crowns us, earth
 And heaven were made for this."

And she looked up into his face,
 And found her true love there:
It was the parting of the ways,
 Unless her soul could dare
Enter the dreadful doors where none
 May draw this quickening breath

Or drink the glory of the sun
But Love and Sin and Death.

Enter the dreadful doors and meet
The mockery and the shame
That wrap the soul from head to feet
In a winding-sheet of flame !
Yet in her eyes he saw his own
Undimmed by doubt or sin :
"To save my soul," she heard him moan,
"We two must enter in."

Enter the dreadful doors and dream
The world well lost for love ;
Would not the choral angels gleam
Around, beneath, above ?
Her blinded eyelids closed ; her head
Bent back beneath his kiss :
"If love is on my side," she said,
"I need no more than this.

“Enter, and I will follow; lead;
I know thy great heart well;
A heart to beat with mine and bleed
With mine in heaven or hell;
Enter;” and lo, his whitening face
Looked down, “Nay, love, but thou
Lead me and save me of thy grace,
Or sin will slay me now.

“Upward and on the woman-soul
Shall lead this baser clay,
Subdue and kindle and control” . . .

“Yes; I will lead the way;
You know not why your strength is fled,
And I so glad of this!
My true love hath my heart,” she said,
“But I — oh, I have his.

“Look — follow me — for I will lead;
I bear thy great heart well,

A heart to beat with mine and bleed
With mine in heaven or hell,"
And through the Gate that, gaunt and black,
Swung open with a groan,
Smiling, she passed; the man shrunk back;
She entered in — alone.

THE OLD SCEPTIC

I AM weary of disbelieving: why should I wound
my love

To pleasure a sophist's pride in a graven image
of truth?

I will go back to my home, with the clouds and
the stars above,
And the heaven I used to know, and the God
of my buried youth.

I will go back to the home where of old in my
boyish pride

I pierced my father's heart with a murmur of
unbelief;

He only looked in my face as I spoke, but his
mute eyes cried

Night after night in my dreams; and he died
in grief, in grief.

Oh, yes; I have read the books, the books that
we write ourselves,

Extolling our love of an abstract truth and our
pride of debate :

I will go back to the love of the cotter who sings
as he delves,

To that childish infinite love and the God
above fact and date.

To that ignorant infinite God who colours the
meaningless flowers,

To that lawless infinite Poet who matches the
law with the crime ;

To the weaver who covers the world with a gar-
ment of wonderful hours,

And holds in His hand like threads the tales
and the truths of time.

Is the faith of the cotter so simple and narrow as
this? Ah, well,

It is hardly so narrow as yours who daub and
plaster with dyes

The shining mirrors of heaven, the shadowy mir-
rors of hell,

And blot out the dark deep vision, if it seemed
to be framed with lies.

No faith I hurl against you, no fact to freeze your
sneers;

Only the doubt you taught me to weld in the
fires of youth

Leaps to my hand like the flaming sword of nine-
teen hundred years,

The sword of the high God's answer, *O Pilate,*
what is truth?

Your laughter has killed more hearts than ever
were pierced with swords,

Ever you daub new mirrors and turn the old
to the wall;

And more than blood is lost in the weary battle
of words;

For creeds are many; but God is One, and
contains them all.

Ah, why should we strive or cry? Surely the
end is close!

Hold by your little truths: deem your triumph
complete!

But nothing is true or false in the infinite heart
of the rose;

And the earth is a little dust that clings to our
travelling feet.

I will go back to my home and look at the way-
side flowers,

And hear from the wayside cabins the sweet
old hymns again,

Where Christ holds out His arms in the quiet
evening hours,

And the light of the chapel porches broods on
the peaceful lane.

And there I shall hear men praying the deep old
foolish prayers,

And there I shall see, once more, the fond old
faith confessed,

And the strange old light on their faces who hear
as a blind man hears, —

*Come unto Me, ye weary, and I will give you
rest.*

I will go back and believe in the deep old foolish
tales,

And pray the sweet old prayers that I learned
at my mother's knee,

Where the Sabbath tolls its peace thro' the
breathless mountain-vales,

And the sunset's evening hymn hallows the
listening sea.

A NIGHT AT ST. HELENA

“It wants three hours to midnight. Do you hear
The sentries drawing closer? At this time
A ghost could scarce evade their vigilance:
I am so precious! Why, no ship can pass
This island, even twenty leagues away,
Without discovery from some signal-post;
Whereat one of your pleasant ships of war
That cruise and crouch around me day and night
Immediately sets out and shadows her
To what is deemed a safer distance. Now,
Would it not seem much easier if you dropped
A little poison in my medicine, doctor?
Or do you take me for the Devil, eh?
You see those floating guards are not enough;
But, after sunset, every fishing boat

Is under watch and ward; and there will
stand

Two sentries at each entrance of my house;
A subaltern's guard six hundred paces off;
A cordon of picquets round the limits, too;
A picquet at every possible landing-place;
And shadowy sentinels upon the cliffs
At quite impossible exits; for you know
That I am somewhat bulky nowadays;
Why, they have even placed a sentinel
On every goat-path leading to the sea!

This is the kind of dream that harasses
One's nerves, and gives one cancer in the
stomach.

I hardly think that you can help me much
Now; you had better leave me. I may sleep.
Good night."

And the physician sadly left
The doomed Napoleon, lying with clenched
 hands,
Pallid and still upon his bleak white couch
Like some great sculptured king upon a tomb.
But all night long the charge and recoil of
 thought
Beneath that aching marble brow denied
Sleep to the dark indomitable soul.
All night behind the quiet sullen face,
Through which as through a clay-cold mask of
 death
Gazed the unconquered proud eternal eyes,
Vain memory maddening into hopeless hope
Fought all his battles over once again,
With all he might have done, the great man's
 last
Inheritance of helpless power. No sound
Escaped the hard relentless chiselled lips.

His heart was far too far away for words
Of grief or scorn to bring its passion back
To that chill chamber of death; yet, as it
 chanced,

First in the dawn of dreams a careless cloud
Of trivial recollection lightly rose,
And almost made him smile, as a spoilt child
Smiles in remembrance of some angry spite
Done to a wooden puppet's battered face.

"Sir Hudson Lowe," began the silent voice
That threshed his bitter dreams out all night
 long,

"Sir Hudson Lowe, who is Sir Hudson Lowe?
Ah, yes, the poor apologetic man
Who thinks that he annoys me, or that I
Am much incensed with him; well, we must
 wear

A name for our vexation, let it be
Sir Hudson Lowe, the name is well enough.

I am incensed with you, Sir Hudson Lowe;

Well, no; I do not need apologies;

I am so insolent, you think; but you

Will need apologies when you are dead,

And bald professors pick your bones in grim

Historical research, Sir Hudson Lowe.

Yes; they will be so angry, they will come

Some to defend you, some to bid you stand

On your defence, for nothing more than this —

That I was much perturbed and never liked

Your name at all: indeed, I almost fear

That I have crumpled it up as I might

crumple

A scrap of paper at Austerlitz, and quite

Unconsciously; ah me, Sir Hudson Lowe,

Will you disturb your country in your grave?

My God, I think that all I need is rest;

The rest these doctors cannot give me; rest;

An hour or so of sleep; I cannot sleep.

The sea sobs round the island! What a night!
And through the darker night within me now
The wandering seas of memory rise and cry:
And there is nought, within me or without,
But flying clouds and ghostly waves that rise
In wailing crowds out of the deep sea-gloom,
And toss their wild white arms and fling them-
selves
Prone on the pitiless reefs and shudder back
Shrivelling into the deep sea-gloom and rise
And toss their arms and wail and fling them-
selves
Down on the reefs once more for leagues and
leagues
Of bitter broken coast and wet black night.
My hopes are cast upon the shoals of time
Like driftwood; like poor painted figure-heads
That once were pointed to a crimson East
Of unimagined Empires; and are now

Relics of splendid wrecks, tossed in the pools
Of yellow spume among the barren rocks.

I must not think: God, do not let me think:
I came so near: I should go mad with thought:
God, do not let me think: I must not think.

See; I am like a little child to-night!
I know how vain such thoughts are; yet I think;
Even as a child who wanders down a street
And touches every door-post as he goes,
If at the end he should remember one
That he has missed, thinks and is gnawed with
mute

Sense of defeat, till he returns at last,
Begins from the beginning once again
And touches all. Victory, oh my God,
I also came so near that I could see
Its emptiness; but what if in this hour

I also am become as one of these ;
A little child, Father, a little child ?

Ah no ; I must not think ! Sleep, sleep, oh
sleep,

Come down ; let me forget a little while ;
Come down ; confuse and muffle me with dreams.
Now let the old hopes and fears and schemes of
state,

The policies and purposes of war,
The plans and charts and lying bulletins,
The flying marches and the subtle flights,
The plumed and hissing hurricane of the charge
And all the red roar of the hidden guns
Mix with the mere mortality that dreams
Of human suffering in the unburied past ;
The passions and ambitions and desires
That ride like waves in furious regiments ;
The glory and the cruelty and the love

That clamour with the legions of the storm,
Now let them mix with this wide hungry sea
Of hopeless memory, weltering in the dark;
Though all beneath the gracious influence
Of sleep must seem so pitiful; helpless, too,
Within its human prison. The sea sobs
Hopeless and helpless, wide and blind as fate,
And darkly swayed and swung, hither and thither
In terrible impotent agony, seeking still
The meaning of its own intense desire
So vainly and for ever. What a night!

There was a meaning once! It seemed as near
As the sky seems to children. Yet, I think
It could not be so near: youth is too young
To feel the worth of the glory that it wears,
The splendour of the unattainable height,
The light that shines upon the unknown way,
The chivalry, the beauty, and the truth,

Which none can see till afterwards; and you
Still come in dreams, Ninette, still come in
dreams,

Across that cherry orchard in the dawn —
My God, how red the dawn is, red as blood! —
And yet you trip so lightly down the path,
You trip so lightly down the path, Ninette,
To meet the little sunburnt lad you knew.

I wonder if you still remember this,
And how from the low ladder, with one hand
Upon his happy shoulder, you leaned down
With that red cherry parting your red lips
And kissed it softly and sweetly through his own
Red parting lips, until the four lips met.

Ninette, Ninette, remember the Old Guard
Before you kiss me. Ah, no, no; defeat
May pass; but you will come again, Ninette;

Do not forget the little lad you loved.

The sea sobs! How the sea sobs! Let it pass.

Ah, yes; there was a meaning. Once, it seemed
To elude me by a hair's breadth as I searched
Through volume after volume by the light
Of guttering candles in the garret there
At Paris, ere the barricadoed streets
Ran red and ere the crash of the Bastille
Shook Europe and my soul and bid them
wake;

And the great crimson furnace that was France
Kept all the world at bay, just as a fire
Lit in a forest camp with none to guard
Keeps all the ravenous eyes of the wild beasts
Back, burning in the gloom of utter doubt:
And once I seemed to approach it as men heard
Beyond the nightmares of the expectant world
That sea of sick white faces whispering death;

And then along the stunned and blinded streets
The roar that rolled with Danton to his doom.

Ninette, Ninette, remember the Old Guard.

I think that he is most a king whose mind
Is likest God's in power and in desire
Both to create and order; and this thought
Seemed like a clue in those old days. My God,
The secret, the great secret, seemed so near
When with a gay young friend of mine I ran
To see the mob insult the king's own courts,
A rabble of some six thousand wretched swine
Possessed with evil spirits; we saw them there
Swarming in dirt and ugliness through all
The gates and corridors until at last
They found the king; and oh, my friend and I,
We saw him, the poor royal nincompoop,
Louis the Weakling, Louis the Locksmith, there,

Having a red cap clapped upon his brows,
Pushed to a window by their dirty hands
And made to bow and scrape and twiddle thumbs
And smile and smirk until the crew below
Was graciously inclined to belch a jest
In answer. Oh, I knew what I would do :
And afterwards the secret seemed my own
When I, too, stood above that seething mob
With the divine sense of the supreme power
Of death and judgment, till the moment came ;
And as I stood there in the palace gates
My lips had but to move, once, with one word,
Fire! And the sudden apocalypse of my guns
Beginning their evangel to the world
Had hurled the chaos back into the gloom.

And you ; oh, poor pale face of Josephine,
Why do you come to mock me with your tears ?
Ah, smile, smile at me ; do not weep ; I'll bear

Everything, but not that! Do you hear me?

Hate,

Mockery, — do you hear me? — everything;

But not those tears. I cannot bear your love;

No; nor your pity; let both die, I say!

Will Love not die, my God, will Love not die?

Ah yes; God knows; for we are parting now;

And I can strangle it. Can a woman kill

The child she suckled, the child whose little feet

She warmed against her heart, whose little fingers

Clung softly round her breasts imprinting them

With blind dimpled caresses, and whose body

Grew like a blossom crumpled for the bliss

Of little laughs and kisses; can she kill

Her child, I say; and I not kill my love?

Oh, you may plead and plead and plead and

plead;

But you shall never move me: I must go

Upward and onward now: I loved you once:
God knows I loved you once; but Love can die;
And here see I kill Love for purposes
Of state. Oh, Love turns up a ghastly face
When he lies dying; and he lingers, lingers;
And I must crush him underfoot and yet
His life seems rooted in an evil dream
That lives for ever; though I burst his heart
And trample it underfoot he lingers and clings
And each of all his pangs is mine, mine, mine!
Oh God, will Love not die, will Love not die?

But they are wiser than they know who say
To fight with ghosts is but to wound the wind;
For the sword passes through them and they
laugh!

I might as easily trample down the sea!
The sea sobs; how the sea sobs; what a night!
Oh now, I see us as we stood that day,

At parting, face to face; I hear you crying
On God and Love and begging me to take
You in my arms, you that I loved so, you
Pleading with me; for we are parting now
For ever; ah, to take you in my arms
Against my heart once, for the last, last time;
To feel your mouth crushed on my mouth again
For one swift moment, while we both forgot
That when the moment ended all must end.

Love, love, you plead with such a tortured face;
But mine, I see, is calm as marble still.

You should have known I loved you, oh my
queen,
You must have known I loved you! Christ,
what tears!

Peace! Peace! You knew it from the very
first,

Or should have known it, had your eyes the
power

To bear the light, or had your heart been true
As I now swear before the face of God
My heart was true to you: we might have risen
Above this world of battles then; but now
I rise alone: it is too late for love;
But, ere I go, remember I have loved
You only; loved you with what heart I had;
And I could stand before the eternal throne
And boast — my heart is great as any man's.
But you could never love. I did not ask
Love from a heart like yours. Had you been
true

No more, but only true — oh, I am cruel,
And shall be crueller yet — I should not thus
Cast you aside as I cast off a cloak
To don the purple. Ah, my queen, you thought
That I was blind; and you must think me blind,

Blind, blind and hard as brutal nature now,
Blind as I seemed, once, wrapt in my vague
dreams,

Dreams vague as the horizons of the world.

Ah, could you dream they ringed no seas, no
shores,

No cities? No; not even a little hut

For Love to hide his head in? All was blank.

I tell you that before ten years have passed

All Europe shall be crouching like a hound

Before this blind man's feet. You poor blind
eyes

That I have loved so long and kissed so often,

I love you still and kiss you for the last

Last time; but all the love I had to give

I keep henceforward as a flaming sword

In my own heart. No scruple, no remorse,

Can check my course at any wayside plea:

The end, the end is all. I never cared

If those whose sight was barred by walls and
 roofs,

Gossipers in the streets, could fail to see

My hope on the horizon; but you stood

With all those chatterers; and you think me
 blind

Because I see my battle rising black

As thunder in the distance, and I pass

Unheeding all the things that claim your eyes

To my own kingdom. Now let those that cross

My path take heed; for when I come alone,

The forces of the world are on my side,

The pitiless powers that feed the sun with fire,

Direct the wheeling planets and control

The invincible countermarching of the stars:

And it shall seem, to those that hear my battle

Rolling afar the great psalm of my guns,

As if the old energies of time and space

From chaos recreated and reformed

To my own order and new purposes
Were passing o'er the borders of this earth,
Chanting, like pilgrims on a pilgrimage
Through the deep gloom of sorrow and sin and
 death,

The dark funereal progress of the world
To the vast triumphs of Eternity;
A chant that sounds as if the seas of doom
Were slowly breaking on an iron shore
Remote and inappellable as God.

Nations shall call me Christ and Anti-Christ;
And in all ages to the end of years
My spirit shall brood upon the seas of war;
And in the dawn of battle, when great kings
Take council, they shall think and dream of me
And speak my name with bated breath; nor
 dare

To call me their exemplar; lest the world
Should mock their mad assumption of my throne;

And when another conqueror comes and goes
His fame shall be a jewel in my crown ;
His sword shall only serve to write my name
More deeply in the memory of mankind.
It is engraved upon the Pyramids
To which I pointed on that golden day
In Egypt. There, before the silent army
I rode and said, "My soldiers, forty ages
Look down upon you." Why, I saw men weep,
Great bearded men ; and I have heard my name
"The little Corporal," sobbed out as they died
From throats that choked with love and blood
and love

And, though I never loved these men at all, —
Yet I shall be remembered when the God
Of battles is forgotten.

Poor pale face,
Upturned to that cold marble countenance,
Why do you plead : I see you, hear you, still.

“No, no; you must not leave me, I should die
With shame. Come back, come back; ah, feel
my heart,
Put your arms round me. Oh, you did not mean
Those bitter bitter words: come back, come
back.”

No; do not hold your arms out; do not lift
Your poor beseeching face to me again.
If shame could kill you or if love had once
Wounded your heart, then pity might kill me.
But since you never loved, never were true
To God or man; why, when the hour is come,
I say that there are forces in this world
Greater than love or pity: not so great,
Perhaps, in heaven; but greater far on earth:
And I have all these forces in my heart.
In one thing, only one, I did you wrong;
I never should have loved you, that was all.
Such men as I should never breathe our love

To women: we should stand or fall alone;
And claim for friends the lonely sun, the dark
Desolate night and give our visions room
To grow in: the blind world is on our side
With all its grey old cruelties of fate;
And there is no appeal to us. Your tears?
A few more drops in that eternal sea
Of sorrow we hear sighing in our sleep,
What are they to a soul that sees the world
Crimsoned with God's own anguish every hour,
While obscure Christs are crucified in dark
Unnoted Calvaries? Nature drinks their blood
And thrives and blossoms on their agony.
Marble were far more pitiful than those
Who cannot share the lesser griefs and pains,
Because they comprehend them and the laws
That keep the calm blind universe at peace,
At perfect peace, I say, in spite of all
Its wild particular wars, consummate peace;

Even as the heavens eternally comprehend
This little grain of dust we call our earth,
And myriads like it, which with all their woes,
Are in the larger view such quiet stars.

No; no; you must not plead; you must not
plead,

Your thoughts and words and dreams wither
away

Like waves against a cliff: I cannot hear
Or understand you more than as a voice
Crying from some far world I used to know
Before my birth; a thin unhappy voice,
Meaningless as the stirring of a child
Within its mother's womb: there is a gulf,
A great gulf fixed between us, and we move
On different planes. No word of yours can
reach

Me; and you will but hurt your own poor pride
If you should try: no; no; you must not plead:

Child, child, you must not plead: there is no
dream

So foolish in this weakling world of ours
As that you call "forgiveness."

There are laws

Of action and reaction; and no force
Can ever be destroyed. Ah yes; I know
That heat may be transfigured into light;
As also I know this — that God forgives
And he that has been injured may forgive;
But, he that injures, never. It would mean
Remorse, you understand, and that is more
Than any man can bear; once let the past,
The might-have-beens and pities flesh their fangs
And they will never leave you. Curse me now;
And I could greet your curses with a smile,
But do not cry for pity to the stars,
Or seek forgiveness from the implacable earth
Or from the soul that sinned so bitterly

And strayed so far from its appointed path
As here on earth to dare to love you, child.
Oh, there are reasons deep as heaven and hell
Why sins like this can never be forgiven.
What can you say to tortured souls like mine
Who hold a world within them, whose blind
struggle

Is one with all the conflict of the ages,
God's paradox, God's universal war?

Why, all men know that war is but a crude
And savage way of ending the dispute
Of nations: not a statesman in this world
But knows this better than the petty fools
Who rave against his ugly thirst for blood;
And yet so mighty and so broadly bound
By the great primal laws of ebb and flow,
The laws that rule the winds, the waves, the
stars,

Are all these larger motions of the deep

We call humanity, that not the power
Of all earth's loftiest individual souls
Can more than take advantage of a tide
Or ride the tempest out, when once the sun
Summons the winds together and with a shout
Sets red for battle o'er the roaring sea.

One with the larger motions of the deep,
The laws that rule my life are not as yours;
Ah, do not hold your arms out; do not lift
Your poor beseeching face to me again.
Ah, still you plead, my love and queen, you
plead.

"I dare not let you leave me," Christ, what
tears,

As the poor words rise trembling, "Listen now!
For now I know that all you say is true:
I never loved you; but I never loved
Any on earth: come back to me, come back!

You know that there are moments in the lives
Of women, when they reach the utmost height,
Moments when all their dreams of heaven are
 flashed

As quintessential blood along their veins
Inspiring them with such divinity
That they outstrip the swiftest thoughts of
 man

And overrule the laws of time and fate.

Then, with that flash, they see the living truth

And love it, as I stand up now and say

I never loved you till this hour; but now

I love you as I never loved my pride,

I love you as I never loved my life,

I love you as I never loved my God;

Husband, I dare not let you go! My God!

My God, be pitiful. I did not know

That love would be like this: my heart is break-
 ing,

Breaking; ah, feel my heart: give me your
hands.

How cold they are, how cold, how cold they are:
Feel, feel my heart; ah, let me warm them there.

You will not leave me; no; God is too good;
Thank God! Thank God! Your tears run
down like rain!

You cannot leave me now! Thank God! Thank
God!"

I only loved one woman in my life
And you are she, the first and last. Farewell.

There was a meaning once; and still it seems
To elude me by a hair's breadth; yet I think
That I should never have attained: my quest
Was infinite: those eastern empires faded,
Horizon after golden glad horizon,
Into another wider than the world.

The secret never seemed so near as now,
Save once when, sailing o'er a bitter sea
My atheists disproved the eternal God
And I confuted them by lifting up
One hand and pointing to the unfathomed night
Sprinkled with its innumerable stars.

Why, there I conquered and I conquer still;
There, dumb and blind as I, my kingdom lay.
For I must think that all these vast desires
Were leading me to cast aside this weight
Of earth, its limitations and its laws,
In wars that spelt my discontent with less
Than heaven; for which I blindly, bloodily
ploughed

My way across the reeling world to God.

Austerlitz, Wagram, Moscow in my hands;
And I in thine, oh God, and I in thine;
The illimitable white wilderness around

The burning city and the long road home;
The white way of the innumerable dead
Horses and men that dotted it for leagues
With little specks of black all stiff and still
Like frozen flies upon a great white wall.

Now all the bands are breaking and I see
All: I am blinded; for I see the Face,
The Face that none can look upon and live;
And I am one with all and God is all;
Nothing but God, I say, nothing but God,
On every side, without me and within.

I triumph, triumph; here, where all is lost,
I say I triumph, here, at Waterloo.

See, as they break, through every gap it streams
Whiter than light, the blinding death of God;
Nothing but God, I say, nothing but God.

I only loved one country in my life,
And that was France: I saw her break her heart

Against the cruel squares: then the last order

Broke from my lips as coldly as a smile.

God! How they rode! All France was in that

last

Charge; and France broke her heart for me; I

saw

France break her heart: her blood was red

As the long British lines: then some one took

My rein and turned my horse away.

Ninette, Ninette, remember the Old Guard.

EARTH-BOUND

GHOSTS? Love would fain believe,

Earth being so sweet, the dead might wish to
return!

Is it so strange if, even in heaven, they yearn
For the May-time and the dreams it used to give?

Through dark abysses of Space,

From strange new spheres where Death has
called them now,

May they not, with a crown on every brow,
Still cry to the loved earth's lost familiar face?

We two, love, we should come

Seeking a little refuge from the light

Of the blinding terrible star-sown Infinite,

Seeking some sheltering roof, some four-walled
home.

From that too high, too wide
Communion with the universe and God,
How sweet to creep back to some lane we trod
Hemmed in with a hawthorn hedge on either side.

Fresh from death's boundless birth,
How sweet the circled vision of the sea
Would seem to souls tired of Infinity,
How sweet the soft blue boundaries of earth,

How sweet the nodding spray
Of pale green leaves that made the sapphire
deep
A background to the dreams of that brief sleep
We called our life when heaven was far away.

How strange would be the sight
Of the little towns and twisted streets again,
Where all the hurrying works and ways of men
Would seem a children's game for our delight.

What boundless heaven could give

 This joy in the strait austere restraints of
 earth,

 Whereof the dead have felt the immortal
 dearth

Who look upon God's face and cannot live ?

Our ghosts would clutch at flowers

 As drowning men at straws, for fear the sea
 Should sweep them back to God's Eternity,
Still clinging to the day that once was ours.

No more with fevered brain

 Plunging across the gulfs of Space and Time
 Would we revisit this our earthly clime
We two, if we could ever come again ;

Not as we came of old,

 But reverencing the flesh we now despise

And gazing out with consecrated eyes,
Each of us glad of the other's hand to hold.

So we should wander nigh

Our mortal home, and see its little roof
Keeping the deep eternal night aloof
And yielding us a refuge from the sky.

We should steal in, once more,

Under the cloudy lilac at the gate,
Up the walled garden, then with hearts elate
Forget the stars and close our cottage door.

Oh then, as children use

To make themselves a little hiding-place,
We would rejoice in narrowness of space,
And God should give us nothing more to lose.

How sweet it all would seem

To souls that from the æonian ebb and flow

Came down to hear once more the to and fro
Swing o' the clock dictate its hourly theme.

How sweet the strange recall

From vast antiphonies of joy and pain
Beyond the grave, to these old books again,
That cosy lamp, those pictures on the wall.

Home! Home! The old desire!

We would shut out the innumerable skies,
Draw close the curtains, then with patient eyes
Bend o'er the hearth; laugh at our memories,
Or watch them crumbling in the crimson fire.

SONG

I CAME to the doors of the House of Love
And knocked as the starry night went by;
And my true love cried "Who knocks?" and I
said
"It is I."

And Love looked down from a lattice above
Where the roses were dry as the lips of the dead;
"There is not room in the House of Love
For you both," he said.

I plucked a leaf from the porch and crept
Away through a desert of scoffs and scorns
To a lonely place where I prayed and wept
And wove me a crown of thorns.

I came once more to the House of Love
And knocked, ah softly and wistfully,
And my true love cried "Who knocks?" and I
said
"None now but thee."

And the great doors opened wide apart
And a voice rang out from a glory of light,
"Make room, make room for a faithful heart
In the House of Love, to-night."

THE SONG OF RE-BIRTH

IN the light of the silent stars that shine on the
struggling sea,

In the weary cry of the wind and the whisper of
flower and tree,

Under the breath of laughter, deep in the tide of
tears,

I hear the Loom of the Weaver that weaves the
Web of Years.

The leaves of the winter wither and sink in the
forest mould

To colour the flowers of April with purple and
white and gold,

Light and scent and music die and are born again
In the sigh of a weary woman that wakes in a
world of pain.

The hound, the fawn and the hawk, and the
doves that croon and coo,

Well we know for our kindred with all beneath
the blue,

The black wave and the flowing wind that hold
our hopes and fears

As we come from the Loom of the Weaver that
weaves the Web of Years.

The green uncrumpling fern and the dew that
dims the rose

Are mingled into the Silence where the wings of
music close,

Mingled into the Timeless that never a moment
mars,

Mingled into the Darkness that made the suns
and stars.

Soul to soul in the Darkness, dust to dust in the
light

The wefts outworn of the ages are gathered
again from the night,

Losing never a thread of their scattered hopes
and fears

As they come from the Loom of the Weaver that
weaves the Web of Years.

Oh, woven in one wide Loom through the throbbing
weft of the whole,

One in spirit and flesh, one in body and soul,
Though the wave is alone in its whisper, the wind
in its weary sigh,

The heart of man in the silence, the night in its
human cry,

One with the flower of a day, one with the
withered moon,

One with the granite mountains that melt into
the noon,

One with the dream that triumphs beyond the
light of the spheres,

We come from the Loom of the Weaver that
weaves the Web of Years.

AMOUR DU CRÉPUSCULE

“To a tune of Blake’s”

SWEET Sleep, linger nigh ;
Let the smile be half a sigh,
Wistful as the parting day,
Tired of striving to be gay.

Sweet Night, with dim hair
Brush the sunny breast half bare,
Where the rosebud softly glows
Through the gloaming of repose.

Sweet Love, with deep wings
Clothe me close in shadowings,
While my softly breathing lips
Touch her softly breathing lips.

Dreams, dreams, dim her eyes,
Let her wake in sweet surprise,
Wondering what sad singing bird
In the twilight softly stirred.

What sweet moment floated nigh,
Flower or wild-winged butterfly,
Honey-laden like a bee,
Murmuring of infinity.

OLD JAPAN

IN old Japan, by creek and bay,
The blue plum-blossoms blow,
Where birds with sea-blue plumage gay
Through sea-blue branches go ;
Dragons are coiling down below
Like dragons on a fan ;
And pig-tailed sailors lurching slow
Through streets of old Japan.

There, in the dim blue death of day,
Where white tea-roses grow,
Petals and scents are strewn astray
Till night be sweet enow ;
Then lovers wander whispering low,
As lovers only can,

Where rosy paper lanterns glow,
Through streets of old Japan.

From Wonderland to Yea-Or-Nay
The junks with painted prow
Dream on the purple water-way,
Nor ever meet a foe ;
Though still, with stiff mustachio
And crooked ataghan,
Their pirates guard with pomp and show
The ships of old Japan.

How far beyond the dawning day
The glories ebb and flow,
Where still the wonder-children play,
The witches mop and mow ;
How far, how far, no chart may show,
To heart of mortal man,
The light, the splendour, and the glow
That once were old Japan.

That land is very far away,
 We lost it long ago;
In old Japan the grass is grey,
 The trees are white with snow;
The sea-blue bird became a crow,
 The lizards leapt and ran,
No dragons mourned that overthrow,
 The dream of old Japan.

In old Japan, at windows grey,
 Where scents of opium flow,
Strange smiling faces, white as clay,
 Nod idly to and fro;
There life and death may come and go,
 With blessing or with ban,
And still no better gift bestow
 Than this, in old Japan.

And now the wistful years delay
 To wonder why and how

The blue fantastic twisted day,
When Emperor Hwang or Chow
Dreamed in the colour and the glow
That light the heart of man,
Could e'er such hours of flowers bestrow
Through streets of old Japan.

In old Japan they used to play
A game forgotten now ;
They filled a nacre-coloured tray
With perfumes in a row,
Breathing of all the flowers that blow
Where dark-blue rivers ran,
Like those upon the plates, you know,
Through fields of old Japan ;

Then with a silver spatula
The mandarins would go
To test the scented dust and say,
With many a *hum* and *ho*,

What flower of all the flowers that grow
For joy of maid or man
Conceived the scents that puzzled so
The brains of old Japan ?

In old Japan, where poets pray
With white uplifted brow,
What mystic floating scents delay
Below the purple bough,
O'er plains no scythe of death may mow,
Nor power of reason scan ?
What mandarin musicians know
The flower of old Japan ?

*There, in the dim blue death of day,
Where white tea-roses grow,
Petals and scents are strewn astray
Till night be sweet enow ;*

*Then lovers wander, whispering low,
As lovers only can,
Where rosy paper lanterns glow,
Through streets of old Japan.*

HAUNTED IN OLD JAPAN

I

MUSIC of the star-shine shimmering o'er the sea,
Mirror me no longer in the dusk of memory ;
Dim and white the rose-leaves drift along the
 shore,
Wind among the roses, blow no more !

II

*All along the purple creek lit with silver foam,
Silent, silent voices, cry no more of home ;
Soft beyond the cherry trees o'er the dim lagoon
Dawns the crimson lantern of the large, low moon.*

III

We that loved in April, we that turned away
Laughing, ere the wood-dove crooned across the
 May,

Watch the withered rose-leaves drift along the
shore,

Wind among the roses, blow no more.

IV

We that saw the winter waste the weeping
bower,

We that saw the young love perish like a flower,

We that saw the dark eyes deepening with
tears,

Hear the vanished voices in the land beyond the
years.

V

We that hurt the thing we loved; we that went
astray,

We that in the darkness idly dreamed of day . . .

. . . Ah! The dreary rose-leaves drift along the
shore,

Wind among the roses, blow no more!

VI

Lonely starry faces, wonderful and white,
Yearning with a cry across the dim sweet night,
All our dreams are blown adrift as flowers before
 a fan,
All our hearts are haunted in the heart of old
 Japan.

VII

Hunted, haunted, haunted; we that mocked
 and sinned
Hear the vanished voices wailing down the wind,
Watch the ruined rose-leaves drift along the
 shoe;
Wind among the roses, blow no more!

VIII

We, the sons of reason, we that chose to bride
Knowledge and rejected the Dream that we
 denied,

We that mocked the Holy Ghost and chose the
Son of Man,¹

Now must wander haunted in the heart of old
Japan.

IX

Haunted, haunted, haunted, by the sound of
falling tears,

Haunted, haunted, haunted, by the yearning of
the years;

Ah! the phantom rose-leaves drift along the
shore;

Wind among the roses, blow no more!

X

*All along the purple creek, lit with silv foam,
Sobbing, sobbing voices, cry no more ohome:
Soft beyond the cherry trees o'er the dn lagoon
Dawns the crimson lantern of the late, low moon.*

¹ V. William Blake on Voltaire.

THE SYMBOLIST

HELP me to seek that unknown land,
Help me to see the shrine,
Help me to feel the hidden hand
That ever holdeth mine.

Help me to seek, and I shall see;
To hear, and I shall know;
To feel, and I shall hold in fee
The realms of earth below.

Help me to mourn, and I shall love;
What grief is like to mine?
Crown me with thorn, the stars above
Shall in the circlet shine!

The mystic angels group and kneel
Around the cross of flame,

Crying, as through the gloom they steal,
The glory of the Name.

The Temple opens wide: none sees
The love, the dream, the light;
Oh blind and finite, are not these
Blinding and infinite?

The veil, the veil is rent: the skies
Are white with wings of fire,
Where victim souls triumphant rise
In torment of desire.

Help me to seek: I would not find,
For when I find I know
I shall have clasped the hollow wind
And built a house of snow.

CHRIST CRUCIFIED

CLEAR on the ghostly sky the sharp black cross,
Bearing the lean white shuddering limbs, arose;
And the dark night grew darker than the depth
Of ocean with unutterable fear.

Then from a land beyond the stars it seemed
There crept a thin sad voice that cut the heart
To hear it, for so cruelly cried the Christ
That, of the women waiting there, two fell
Fainting; but the third woman silently
With white clenched hands clung upright to the
cross;

And from her mouth a thin bright thread of
blood
Ran trickling down; then darker grew the night,
And dark beyond all hope of any dawn,

Death sank upon the Christ who cried, "My
God,

My Father, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

When over Calvary the darkness waned,

Clear on the ghostly sky the sharp black cross

Bearing the naked lean white limbs arose;

And, of the women waiting there, two slept;

But one clung closely to the bitter tree.

Her mouth was bloody from her broken heart,

And Death e'en now was laying his cold hand

Upon her brow; the twain who slept were good

And holy women; this was Magdalen.

PASTICHE

Low, behind dark apple-boughs,
And the farmer's gabled house,
 Sinks the slowly reddening sun;
 Day is nearly done.

Now the harvest-burdened wains
Drone along the scented lanes
 Homeward; and the deep skies break,
 And the stars awake.

Now the anchor plunges bright;
And the ship that longed for night,
 In the haven, far below,
 Furls her wings of snow.

It is finished: Love is dead,
And the birds with nestling head

Now beneath a ruffled wing
All forget to sing.

Looming on the coloured West,
Like young giants, fain of rest,
Now the tired labourers go,
Footing dark and slow.

Homeward now from field and fold,
Toilers of the heat and cold,
Men that laboured long to learn,
Patiently return.

In the rosy deeps of space,
Flower-like as an angel's face,
Faint and sweet, from realms afar,
Shines the Vesper star.

It is finished: toil is o'er,
And the sea forgets the shore,

And the moon and stars confess
Man's great weariness.

It is finished, — song and sin :

And the fruits are gathered in :

And the weary reapers come,

And the last load home.

Now are healed the warrior's wounds ;

In the West a bell resounds :

It is finished ! sleep and rest !

Man has done his best.

ART

“The voice of one crying in the wilderness”

I

BEYOND; beyond; and yet again beyond!

What went ye out to seek, oh foolish-fond?

Is not the heart of all things here and now?

Is not the circle infinite, and the centre

Everywhere, if ye would but hear and enter?

Come; the porch bends and the great pillars
bow.

II

Come; come and see the secret of the sun;

The sorrow that holds the warring worlds in one;

The pain that holds Eternity in an hour;

One God in every seed self-sacrificed,

One star-eyed, star-crowned universal Christ,

Re-crucified in every wayside flower.

DE PROFUNDIS

THOU who hast taken the dust of the earth and
fashioned

Of thine own joy and pain

This body, with thine own love endowed and
empassioned

Till it return again

Dust into dust, oh Thou who livest and reignest

To all Eternity,

Like as a father pitieth his children,

Pity Thou me.

Thou who hast made me an heir to the sins of
the ages

With power to look above

And claim, if I will, thine agony for my wages,

Thy wages for my love ;

To wash in the bitter streams of eternal anguish

That redden sky and sea,

Like as a father pitieth his children,

Pity Thou me!

Thou who hast given me the law and the will
and the power,

The weakness and the worth,

The strength to struggle and conquer for an
hour

And then sink back to the earth,

See, Lord, my heart was broken in that great
darkness;

Lord Christ, wilt Thou not see?

Like as a father pitieth his children

Pity Thou me.

Thou who hast given me the wonder and the
vision,

The dream and the desire;

Yet withered them root and branch ere their
fruition,

 Heaped dust upon my fire,
Given me the blinded eyes, the feet to
wander

 How far, oh God, from Thee,
Like as a father pitieth his children
 Pity Thou me.

Thou who hast given me friends and the heart to
wound them,

 Even whom I loved the most;
Even when mine arms were yearning to go round
them

 My mouth could scoff and boast;
Or I was dumb, when all the soul of sorrow
 Cried unto Love and Thee,
Like as a father pitieth his children
 Pity Thou me.

Not for the seed of goodness idly cherished

With blind and secret tears;

Not for the frail ideal dreams that perished

With the dull lapse of years;

Be near me now; thy creature in its weakness

Can only cry to Thee —

Like as a father pitieth his children,

Pity Thou me.

Thou who hast given me love and again hast
taken

The loved one from my side,

Who am all too weak; ah, why hast Thou for-
saken

Me, not Thy Crucified,

Father, only Thy little one, not the Master

Of earth and sky and sea?

Like as a father pitieth his children,

Pity Thou me!

THE RALLY

I

How beautiful is the battle,
How splendid are the spears,
When our banner is the sky
And our watchword *Liberty*,
And our kingdom lifted high above the years.

II

How purple shall our blood be,
How glorious our scars,
When we lie there in the night
With our faces full of light
And the death upon them smiling at the stars.

III

How golden is our hauberk,
And steel, and steel our sword,
And our shield without a stain
As we take the field again,
We whose armour is the armour of the Lord!

THE ANSWER

DO YE BELIEVE? We never wrote

For fools at ease to know

The doubt that grips us by the throat,

The faith that lurks below;

But we have stood beside our dead,

And, in that hour of need,

One tear the Man of Sorrows shed

Was more than any creed.

Do ye believe? — from age to age

The little thinkers cry;

And rhymesters ape the puling sage

In pride of artistry.

Did Joshua stay a sun that rolls

Around a central earth? —

Our modern men have modern souls

And formulate their mirth.

But, while they laugh, from shore to shore,

From sea to moaning sea,

Eloi, Eloi, goes up once more

Lama sabachthani!

The heavens are like a scroll unfurled,

The writing flames above —

This is the King of all the world

Upon His Cross of Love!

His members marred with wounds are we

In whom the spirit strives,

One Body of one Mystery,

One Life in many lives:

Darkly as in a glass we see

The mystic glories glow,

Nor shrink from God's Infinity

Incarnate here below!

In flower, and dust, in chaff and grain,

He binds Himself and dies,

We live by His eternal pain,
His hourly sacrifice;
The limits of our mortal life
Are His: the whisper thrills
Under the sea's perpetual strife
And through the sunburnt hills.

Seek; ye shall find each flower on earth
A gateway to My heart,
Whose Life has brought each leaf to birth;
The whole is in the part!
So to My sufferers have ye given
What help or hope may be,
Oh then, through earth, through hell, through
heaven,
Ye did it unto Me!

Darkly, as in a glass, our sight
Still gropes through Time and Space:

We cannot see the Light of Light
With angels, face to face;
Only the tale His martyrs tell
Around the dark earth rings —
He died and He went down to hell
And lives — the King of Kings!

Do ye believe? On every side
Great hints of Him go by:
Souls that are hourly crucified
On some new Calvary!
Oh, tortured faces, white and meek,
Half seen amidst the crowd,
Grey suffering lips that never speak,
The Glory in the Cloud!

Do ye believe? The straws that dance
Far down the dusty road
Mean little to the careless glance
By careless eyes bestowed,

Till full into your face the wind
 Smites, and the laugh is dumb;
And, from the rending heavens behind,
 Christ answers — *Lo, I come.*

SEA FOAM

TAKE my song and let it be
Frail as foam upon the sea :
Dumb with sorrow let it die,
It is not more frail than I.

I have seen it in my dreams
Floating over sapphire streams,
Like a dying swan that loud
Poureth light on cliff and cloud :

I have seen it soaring high
Scattering music o'er the sky :
But I woke with face aglow
And I found it lying low,

In a stony barren place,
Asking comfort, with its face

Pressed against the bitter dearth
Of our mournful mother, Earth.

When in dreams it sang again
Songs of sun and wind and rain,
Oft it looked on me and smiled,
Flying o'er the waters wild.

In the dark and noisy town
Let it weary, sink and drown:
If it can bestow on one
Pilgrim here beneath the sun,

Wanderer o'er the world's wide sea,
Half the joy it gave to me,
Half the gladness born of pain
I shall not have sung in vain.

Take my song and let it be
As the foam upon the sea;
Let it live and love and die,
It is not more frail than I.

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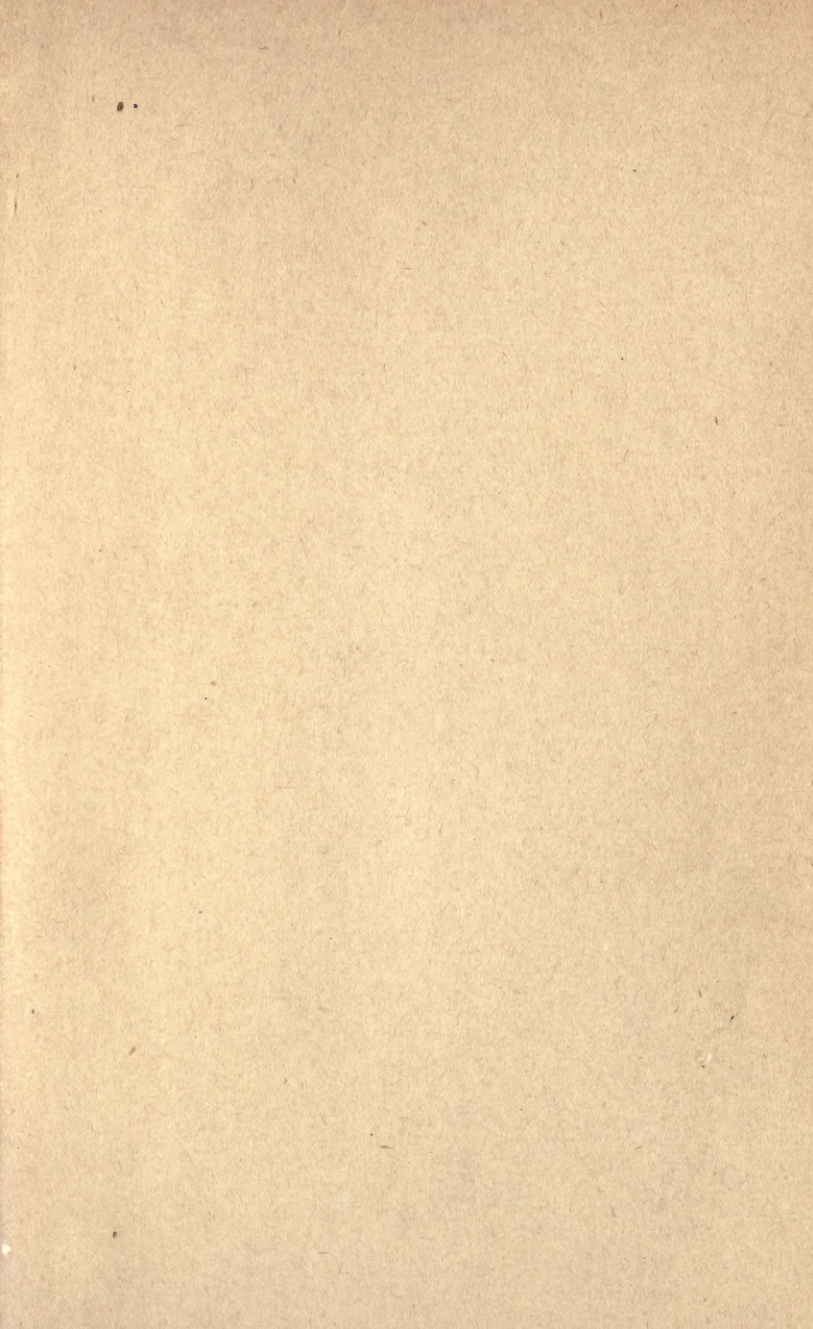
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